

Decision to ban S. African gold due in September

By Roger Boye

Legislation banning the importation of South African Krugerrands should be sent to President Reagan by mid-September for his signature or veto, say congressional aides.

The bill nearing passage in Congress also requires that Uncle Sam produce four types of bullion gold pieces, the first such coinage in U.S. history. Those and other provisions of the bill are designed to punish the South African government for its apartheid policies.

On Aug. 1, the House of Representatives endorsed a Krugerrand ban and other sanctions by a vote of 380-48, and the Senate is expected to give its approval when the summer recess ends on Sept. 9. The legislation has been winding its way through Congress since January.

President Reagan may veto the bill despite its overwhelming support in Congress because the administration has opposed the placing of economic sanctions on South Africa. A veto would force the bill back to Congress for an override attempt.

According to the legislation, after Oct. 1, 1986, the U.S. Mint would issue four types of bullion coins ranging from a one-ounce gold piece with a \$50 face value to a 1/10-ounce piece with a \$5 face value. The coins—designed to compete with the Krugerrand—would be sold to investors for the value of the gold plus production costs.

Also, the bill in Congress does not prohibit the sale of Krugerrands already in this country. Since the early 1970s, Krugerrands have been the world's best-known "bullion gold," coins that are traded for their metal content, not as collector's items.

● In one of the biggest rare-coin sales ever, an investor paid \$286,000 at a Chicago auction last month for a U.S. gold piece minted in 1907.

The \$20 "double eagle" designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and in ultrahigh relief ranks among the 12 rarest U.S. coins, judging from auction statistics compiled by Coin World.

In all, hobbyists shelled out \$9.2 million for about 2,000 lots of rare coins, the largest such sale in Chicago history. Other top prices in "Auction '85"—conducted by four companies at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on July 26 and 27—included \$99,000 for an 1875 \$3 gold piece; \$57,750 for an 1876-CC [for Carson City, Nev.] 20-cent piece; and \$46,750 for a 1797 half dollar.

The highest-priced U.S. coin is the gold Brasher doubloon of 1787. A specimen sold for \$725,000 in a 1979 auction.